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RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI IMMEDIATE 0261
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0249

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 001260

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/14/2023

TAGS: [UNSC](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [RU](#) [GO](#) [PBTS](#) [BE](#)

SUBJECT: TFGG01: GEORGIA CRISIS: BELGIUM SEES NEXT STEPS
FOR THE SECURITY COUNCIL

REF: A. A) STATE 87254

[1](#)B. B) STATE 87098

[1](#)C. C) BRUSSELS 01241

Classified By: CDA WAYNE BUSH, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Belgium, as with other EU members, continues to be concerned about the agreement reached between Russia and Georgia. Belgium agrees on the urgency of establishing a mechanism to support international observers in Georgia, with reliance on the OSCE observers already on the ground there as the logical first step. The next steps in the response to the crisis should be under the auspices of the UNSC. However, Belgium admits that the Russians are in the best possible position for the moment and that Russia had been waiting for an excuse to launch its action in Georgia. Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht was critical of the clause in the EU cease-fire plan allowing Russia to take extra security measures pending deployment of an "international mechanism." END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) On August 14, Charge delivered the points in refs A and B to Jean-Luc Bodson, Adjoint Director of the Office of the Minister in the Belgian MFA. Bodson reported that Belgian Foreign Minister De Gucht had attended the EU Council of Ministers meeting in Brussels August 13. He reported that many member states had had doubts about the real meaning of the Russia-Georgia cease-fire agreement, especially Part 5 which allowed Russian "peace-keeping forces" to stay and be enlarged while waiting for the arrival of international peacekeeping forces. Member states were also concerned that no mention was included about the territorial integrity of Georgia.

[1](#)3. (C) Bodson said the EU had expressed its support for urgent development of a mechanism to allow observers to be deployed to Georgia. Bodson said it would clearly make sense to rely first on the OSCE observers already on the ground there. Bodson said the EU is ready to send any help--including troops and supplies--once a UNSC mandate is agreed to support such a step. Belgium expects the next step to be a debate within the UNSC.

[1](#)4. (C) Clearly, the Russians will not want a resolution but probably only a declaration with both parties denouncing the use of violence. Bodson said the prevailing mood at the meeting yesterday was that there was a fragile cease-fire in place. It was important to consolidate it and not to antagonize the Russians. The agreement brokered by French President Sarkozy was not even in writing but had only been agreed to on the phone by Russian President Medvedev.

[1](#)5. (C) Bodson noted that there are clearly red lines that should be in any agreement, including protecting the

territorial integrity of Georgia. However, there must be more clarity about what is actually happening in Georgia. He referred to press reports during yesterday's Council meeting that Russian tanks were entering Gori. However, moments later other reports contradicted that story. Such confusion highlights the need to have international observers on the ground in Georgia.

16. (C) Asked whether Belgium would be willing to provide observers, Bodson replied that was "thinking far ahead." Before such a step could happen the Security Council would need to pass a resolution to consolidate agreement between the parties and then negotiate the mechanism for observers and a longer-term cease-fire. It is unlikely the Russians would evacuate areas they currently occupy but it might be possible to deploy international observers alongside the Russian units. Whether the observers were military or civilian would need to be negotiated with the Russians. However, it was important that observers should have a physical presence on the ground.

17. (C) Bodson thinks the Russians are in the best possible position and that they had been waiting for an excuse to launch an operation. However, he asked, "Are any of us willing to confront the Russians over Georgia?" "I doubt it," he answered himself. Nevertheless, the Charge stressed that it remained important to make the Russians understand clearly the damage they have done to their international standing and to their relations with the U.S. and the EU.

18. (C) It was too soon to decide on the impact of the

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crisis on EU-Russian relations, added Bodson. However, that would be on the agenda for the EU meeting being held in Avignon in early September.

19. (U) In an interview given to a Belgian newspaper, Foreign Minister De Gucht also criticized the clause in the cease-fire plan that allowed Russia to take extra security measures pending deployment of an "international mechanism." This allows Russia to deploy its "peace-keeping" forces to protect its minorities residing abroad. De Gucht added, "That principle does not exist in international law. You can only protect your own citizens via consular or political ways, not by invading another country. The EU Presidency needs to be clearer on that point."

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